

at least two video game systems, each video game system being configured to connect to said web server computer via the Internet and to communicate status data indicative of an activity engaged in by a user thereof,

wherein said web server computer generates a session file when a given video game system user connects thereto, the session file comprising status data of the given user and status data of each of two or more other video game system users identified on a buddy list defined by the given user, and

wherein the status data of the other users on the buddy list is accessible to the given user even if the given user and the other users are engaged in different activities.

11 2. (Amended) The system according to claim 1, wherein the status data for each user further indicates whether that user is online and able to send/receive messages.

3. (Amended) The system according to claim 1, wherein the status data for each user further indicates whether that user is online, but not able to send/receive messages.

4. (Amended) The system according to claim 1, wherein the status data for each user further indicates whether that user is online and able to send, but not receive, messages.

6. (Amended) The system according to claim 5, wherein each user can configure the accessibility of the user's profile to other users.

12 7. (Amended) The system according to claim 5, wherein a system administrator can configure the accessibility of each user's profile to other users.

25. (Amended) The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the messaging service program code includes a preferences routine for setting a message alert to provide an alert to a user when a message is received.

26. (Amended) The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the messaging service program code includes an auto-start routine for automatically logging a user into the messaging service.

27. (Amended) The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the messaging service program code includes a start routine for logging a user into the messaging service as being engaged in a particular activity on the video game system.

Please add the following new claims 29-38:

--29. A video game machine comprising:

an application program executing system for executing an application program comprising a video game and a messaging service client; and

a communication circuit for connecting over a communication network to a server computer,

wherein a video game machine user can use the messaging service client to communicate with other users connected to the server computer while the application program is executed by the application program executing system.

30. The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the other users are selected from a user-definable list.

31. The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client provides status data of the other users connected to the server computer.

32. The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the application program executing system is embodied in a hand-held housing.

33. The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the application program executing system is embodied in a console.

34. The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client comprises a user registration routine for registering a user as a user of the messaging service.

184 35. The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client comprises a user profile routine for creating a user profile.

36. The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client comprises a user preferences routine for setting user preferences.

37. The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client comprises an auto-start routine for automatically logging the user into the messaging service.

38. The video game machine according to claim 29, wherein the messaging service client comprises a start routine for logging the user into the messaging service as being engaged in a particular activity on the video game system.--